

Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-18

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USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 DRC-01 /174 W

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R 041040Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7193

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 2220

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ELAB, SU

SUBJ: NIMEIRI CRACKS DOWN ON DISSIDENT UNION LEADERS

REF: KHARTOUM 2111

1. SUMMARY: GOS DECISION TAKE HARDLINE AGAINST UNION LEADERS AND RANK-AND-FILE WHO PARTICIPATED IN ANTI-GOS STRIKES LAST MONTH REFLECTED BOTH IN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT NUMBER UNION MEMBERS WILL BE TRIED AND IN PRESSING FOR NEW UNION ELECTIONS TO REPLACE LEADERS NOW IN JAIL. REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER NEW LEADERSHIP OR CHASTENED HOLDOVERS WILL BE MORE LOYAL OVER LONGER RUN TO REGIME. END SUMMARY.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TRIALS. NIMEIRI'S APPARENT DECISION (REFTEL) TO TAKE HARD LINE AGAINST THOSE UNION LEADERS AND RANK-AND-FILE WHO LET ANTI-GOS STRIKES LAST MONTH HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED BY DECISION ANNOUNCED SEPT. 27 TO BRING 60 UNION MEMBERS TO TRIAL. OF THE GROUP, 53 WILL BE
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CHARGED UNDER SEC. 17 OF STATE SECURITY ACT WITH INVOLVEMENT

IN ILLEGAL STRIKE AIMED AT OPPOSING AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENT AND HARMING NATIONAL ECONOMY. REMAINING SEVEN WILL BE CHARGED UNDER PENAL CODE (SEC.105) WITH SEDITION INVOLVING ATTEMPT AROUSE ILLEGAL OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT. FIRST CHARGE PUNISHABLE BY UP TO SEVEN YEARS IMPRISONMENT, SECOND BY UP TO THREE. THOSE CHARGED DO NOT INCLUDE LEADERS OF SUDAN RAILWAYS WORKERS TRADE UNION (SRWTU) ALONG WITH A NUMBER OF OTHERS WHOSE CASES STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION. HENCE, FURTHER CHARGES CAN BE EXPECTED. ATTGEN'S OFFICE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THREE PEOPLE BEING CHARGED UNDER STATE SECURITY ACT (SEC. 29(C)) WITH DISTRIBUTION PRINTED MATERIAL ATTACKING GOS. IT NOT CLEAR WHETHER THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE ALSO UNION MEMBERS.

3. ELECTION NEW UNION LEADERS: UNDER STRONG URGING BY WORKER'S AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF SSU AND PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE OF SUDAN WORKERS FEDERATION (SWF), SEVERAL UNIONS HAVE PURGED THEIR JAILED LEADERS AND ELECTED NEW OFFICIALS. MOST NOTABLE OF THESE IS THE RAILWAY (SRWTU) BUT GOS PRINTING UNION AND FOOD PROCESSING UNION HAVE TAKEN SIMILAR ACTIONS, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS OTHERS WILL FOLLOW. IN CASE SRWTU, NEW PRESIDENT IS MUHAMMAD HASSAN ABDULLA, VICE PRESIDENT MAHDI AHMED IDRIS AND SYG OSMAN FADL. WITH SSU AND SWF OFFICIALS MAKING FREQUENT TRIPS TO ATBARA IN LAST TEN DAYS, IT CLEAR NEW SLATE VERY MUCH A GOS CHOICE. IDRIS, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS "ACTING PRESIDENT" WHO SURFACED WHEN FORMER PRESIDENT MITAY WAS JAILED AND WHO STRONGLY BACKED GOS BY URGING WORKERS RETURN TO JOBS. NEW SRWTU CENTRAL COMMITTEE IMMEDIATELY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE IN WHICH THEY PLEDGED SUPPORT GOS AND NIMEIRI, CONDEMNED RECENT CONSPIRACY, AND STATED THEY WOULD WORK TO UPHOLD UNITY OF SUDANESE LABOR MOVEMENT. NIMEIRI PERSONALLY TELEPHONED HIS THANKS TO ABDULLA FOR MESSAGE OF SUPPORT.

4. COMMENT: PERMANENCY OF NEW COMMITTEE'S AND PARTICULARLY ABUULLA'S, SUPPORT FOR GOS SOMEWHAT SUSPECT. ABDULLA IS ARAB-NATIONALIST AND FORMER MEMBER PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHO RAN AGAINST MITAY IN ELECTIONS LAST YEAR. AT THAT TIME HE WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY GOS WHICH THEN IN PROCESS PURGING ARAB-NATIONALIST FROM KEY POSITIONS. GOS BACKING
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OF HIS CANDIDACY AT THIS POINT PROBABLY BASED LESS ON CONVICTION THAN ON LACK OF VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. MITAY AND ABDULLA HAVE LONG BEEN MAIN FIGURES BATTLING FOR LEADERSHIP OF UNION. WITH FORMER OUT OF PICTURE, ABDULLA WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN CHOICE OF MAJORITY REGARDLESS OF GOS POSITION. WITH THIS BACKGROUND, ABDULLA DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE LEADER IN WHOM NIMEIRI CAN HAVE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE. HE ALSO TYPIFIES A GENERAL GOS PROBLEM:

IT IS ONE THING TO PURGE OLD LEADERSHIP. IT IS QUITE ANOTHER
TO INSURE THAT THOSE CHOSEN IN THEIR PLACE (AS WELL AS
RANK-AND-FILE IN UNIONS) WILL CONTINUE BACK THE REGIME
IN SOME FUTURE INSTANCES OF DOMESTIC UNREST--PARTICULARLY
ECONOMIC.
BREWER

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